

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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P 312227Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4054

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 6831

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SUBJ: COLOMBIA AND THE CUBAN ISSUE

1. SUMMARY: PRES-ELECT LOPEZ TOLD ME HE CONTEMPLATED NO UNILATERAL

MOVES ON CUBA. HE DOES FEEL PRESSURE TO DO SOMETHING, HOWEVER, AND HE SAID HE COULD NOT POLITICALLY AFFORD TO BE "BEHIND" PASTRANA ON THIS ISSUE. HE PROPOSES TO ANNOUNCE PUBLICLY PROBABLY IN HIS INAUGURATION SPEECH THAT COLOMBIA WILL SPONSOR, TOGETHER WITH OTHER OAS MEMBER STATES, A MOVE TO STUDY WHETHER THE CONDITIONS WHICH GAVE RISE TO THE IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS CONTINUE TO EXIST, BUT WITHOUT MENTIONING DATES OR TIMING. HE INDICATED NO OBJECTION TO CONVOCAION OF AN OAS MEETING IN NOV, BUT HE DID INDICATE A DESIRE TO DEMONSTRATE SOME MOVE IN THAT REGARD SOON, PERHAPS SOME PROCEDURAL CONSULTATION OR PUBLIC STATEMENT LOOKING TOWARD A NOV CONVOCAION. END SUMMARY

2. I MET WITH PRES-ELECT LOPEZ THIS MORNING. I REVIEWED OUR POSITION AND BRIEFLY DESCRIBED AMB MAILLIARD'S CONSULTATIONS WITH FACIO AND PRES PEREZ. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT IF UNILATERAL ACTION COULD BE AVOIDED AND AN OAS MEETING NOT CALLED UNTIL LATE NOV OR DEC, THE ISSUE COULD BE CONSIDERED IN A MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE AND FRUITFUL ENVIRONMENT.

3. LOPEZ SAID THAT THE UNDERSTANDING HE HAD GAINED OF OUR POSITION
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WAS AS I HAD DESCRIBED IT; HE ADDED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD WE HAD

ASSURED PEREZ THAT WE WOULD NOT VOTE AGAINST HOLDING AN OAS MEETING IN NOV NOR LOBBY FOR OTHERS TO OPPOSE. HE DID NOT PLAN TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION. IN FACT HE SAID, THE URGE TO "UNILATERALISM" HAD BEEN STIMULATED BY THE "NEW DIALOGUE" ITSELF IN THAT WHEN IT WAS FELT THAT THE EXISTING MACHINERY WAS NOT HANDLING THE ISSUES WE SIMPLY HELD A MEETING OF MINISTERS OUTSIDE OF THE FRAMEWORK AND PROCEDURES OF THE ORGANIZATION EVEN THOUGH THE OAS MACHINERY PROVIDED FOR MEETINGS OF FORNMIN. (THIS IS A LINE LOPEZ HAS PUSHED BEFORE; SEE BOGOTA 3660). HE SAID THAT BASICALLY HE AGREED WITH PASTRANA'S GENERAL POLICY OF WANTING TO MOVE IN A MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK.

4. LOPEZ THEN SAID THAT THE RECENT HIJACKING AGREEMENT HAD NEVER-THELESS CREATED POPULAR EXPECTATIONS AND THERE WAS PRESSURE FROM HIS OWN PARTY. HE COULD NOT AFFORD TO BE "BEHIND" PASTRANA ON THIS ISSUE OR APPEAR TO BE LESS ACTIVE OR INTERESTED IN IT. HE HAD TO TAKE SOME ADDITIONAL STEP NOW. WHAT HE PROPOSED TO DO WAS TO ANNOUNCE PUBLICLY THAT COLOMBIA WOULD SPONSOR (PATROCINARA) OAS CONSIDERATION OF THE MATTER. HE SAID HE WOULD NOT HOWEVER MENTION DATES OR TIMING.

5. HE EXPANDED BY SAYING THAT, IN EITHER HIS INAUGURAL SPEECH, OR THE AUG 2 SPEECH AT THE "NATIONAL HOMAGE" DINNER FRIENDS ARE GIVING HIM, HE PLANNED TO SAY SOMETHING AS FOLLS: PRESIDENT PASTRANA HAD TAKEN A SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARD NORMALIZING CUBA'S SITUATION BY SIGNING THE HIJACKING AGREEMENT, BY THE DESPATCH TO HABANA OF COLOMBIAN DIPLOMATIC AGENTS TO SIGN IT AND BY THE RECEIPT IN BOGOTA OF CUBAN DIPLOMATS FOR THE SAME PURPOSE. IT WAS NECESSARY TO RETAIN THIS MEOMENTUM. HE DID NOT HOWEVER INTEND TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE NEW DIALOGUE AND MOVE OUTSIDE OF THE OAS LEGAL AND STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK.

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(HE SAID HE KNOWS THIS IS A "NEEDLE" BUT HE WANTED TO USE IT TO MEET HIS DOMESTIC NEEDS AND TACTICAL REQUIREMENTS.) THEREFORE COLOMBIA WILL SPONSOR AND PUSH, IN CONSULTATION WITH OTHER FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS, A MOVE TO STUDY WHETHER THE "CONDITIONS WHICH GAVE RISE TO THE IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS CONTINUE TO EXIST". (RE REPEATED THE WORDS IN QUOTES ON TWO OCCASIONS IN THE SAME WAY, WHICH WOULD INDICATE THIS IS THE LANGUAGE HE INTENDS TO USE AND THAT HE ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO THE PHRASING. THIS IN TURN SUGGESTS THAT HE IS THINKING IN TERMS OF THE CALDERA-FACIO THESIS THAT IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT THE SAME CONDITIONS WHICH PROMPTED SANCTIONS DO NOT EXIST THE BASIS FOR THE SANCTIONS DISAPPEARS AND NATIONS ARE FREE TO DO WHAT THEY WANT.)

6. I THEN SAID THAT I UNDERSTOOD HIM TO SAY HE WOULD BE WILLING TO WAIT FOR AN OAS MEETING IN NOVEMBER. AT THIS POINT HE HESITATED AND OBSERVED THAT ONE MIGHT SPEED THINGS UP BY HAVING A STUDY COMMISSION TAKE THREE MONTHS TO REPORT TO THE OAS FOR ACTION. I SAID THAT THE CONVOKING OF AN OAS MEETING TO INITIATE OAS ACTION BEFORE NOVEMBER WOULD GIVE US PROBLEMS. WE BELIEVED A MEETING SHOULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL NOVEMBER, ALTHOUGH I PRESUMED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION TO PROCEDURAL CONSULTATIONS GETTING UNDERWAY LOOKING TO A CONVOCATION IN NOVEMBER. HE ONLY NODDED BUT DID NOT COMMENT ON THIS POINT. HE THEN REPEATED THAT HE HAD TO TAKE SOME STEP TO SHOW HE WAS NOT "BEHIND" AUASTRANA. (COMMENT: WHILE LOPEZ SAID HE WOULD NOT PUBLICLY MENTION A DATE OR TIMEFRAME, HE MAY WELL FEEL THE POLITICAL

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NEED TO DEMONSTRATE SOMETHING IS UNDERWAY FOR A LATER OAS ACTION. HE MAY THEREFORE WISH TO BEGIN SOME PUBLICITY OR PROCEDURAL MOVE SOON LOOKING TOWARD A LATER MEETING.)

7. LOPEZ SAID HE HAD SUGGESTED THAT FACIO NOT COME TO BOGOTA NOW.

8. IN AN INTERESTING ASIDE LOPEZ SAID THAT THE IMPRESSION HE WOULD MOVE SOON UNILATERALLY PROBABLY CAME FROM AN INCIDENT DURING HIS TRIPARTITE MEETING WITH ODUBER AND TORRIJOS IN PANAMA ON JUNE 8 (BOGOTA 5017). A CUBAN REP WHO WAS IN PANAMA CAME TO SEE HIM AND REFERRED TO THE HIJACKING NEGOTIATIONS THEN UNDERWAY WITH COLOMBIA (AND WHICH HAD BEEN UNDERWAY FOR SOME TIME). THE CUBAN TOLD HIM THAT CUBA WOULD PREFER TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT WITH THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION; LOPEZ REPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE MORE CONVENIENT FOR HIM IF IT WERE SIGNED BY PASTRANA. (COMMENT: THIS WOULD INDICATE THAT LOPEZ MAY HAVE LEARNED FOR THE FIRST TIME ABOUT THE HIJACKING NEGOTIATIONS FROM THIS

SOURCE. WE ARE TOLD - BUT ARE NOT CERTAIN - THAT THE FIRST TIME VAZQUEZ CARRIZOSA INFORMED HIM WAS WHEN VAZQUEZ TELEPHONED LOPEZ IN LONDON TO ASK HIS CONCURRENCE AND TO NOMINATE A REPRESENTATIVE TO GO TO HABANA FOR THE SIGNING. IF THIS IS TRUE IT MIGHT EXPLAIN LOPEZ' REPETITIVE PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT HE WOULD WAIT UNTIL AUGUST 7 BEFORE DECIDING WHAT TO DO ON CUBA SINCE HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE PASTRANA GOVERNMENT MIGHT DO. IT MIGHT ALSO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE COOLNESS LOPEZ HAS SHOWN TOWARD LIAISON WITH THE PASTRANA GOVERNMENT; HIS DECISION TO LET PASTRANA SIGN THE AGREEMENT MAY THUS HAVE BEEN SIMPLY A REFUSAL TO TAKE ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOMETHING HE WAS NOT KEPT INFORMED ABOUT. THE PRACTICAL RESULT - AND POSSIBLE DELIBERATE INTENT - OF COURSE WAS TO CREATE THE PRECISE "PRESSURE AND EXAMPLE" WHICH LOPEZ STATES NOW REQUIRES HIM TO TAKE ADDITIONAL STEPS (SEE PARA 4 ABOVE.)
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PUBLIC DISCLOSURE, PRESIDENT ELECT, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, SPEECHES, MEETINGS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BOGOTA06831
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740208-0956
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974074/aaaaacws.tel
Line Count: 185
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COLOMBIA AND THE CUBAN ISSUE
TAGS: PFOR, CO, CU, US, OAS, (LOPEZ)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005